

**Notice of Availability
Environmental Assessment
Little Creek Community Pit
Washington County, Utah**

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DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

Agency: Bureau of Land Management, St. George Field Office

Project Proponent: Bureau of Land Management, St. George Field Office

Public Review and Comments Requested:

This letter serves as the Notice of Availability for Environmental Assessment (UT-100-09-EA-09) for the Little Creek Community Pit proposed boundary designation modification and mining plan update. Information about this project and copies of the EA can be obtained by contacting:

Russell Schreiner, BLM-St. George Field Office Geologist
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, UT 84790
Telephone (435)688-3205 Fax (435)688-3252
Email: russell.schreiner@blm.gov

The public review and comment period for this EA will extend for 30 days, beginning on November 15, 2009 and ending on December 15, 2009. Written comments on the EA must be received by BLM by close of business on December 15, 2009. Please address your comments to:

Bureau of Land Management, St. George Field Office
Attn: Russell Schreiner
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, UT 84790

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the above address during regular business hours 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the Environmental Assessment and other related documents. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Project Summary:

The Little Creek Cinder Community Pit administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is located on Little Creek (Gray Knoll) cinder cone in Apple Valley approximately 10 miles southeast of Hurricane and 20 miles east of St. George in T. 43 S., R. 11 W., sec. 6 and T. 43 S., R. 12 W., sec. 1 in Washington County, Utah (Figure 1). Mining of cinders as a source of lightweight aggregate has taken place in the Little Creek cinder cone (Gray Knoll) site since 1945 and a total of 200,000 tons of cinders as determined by GPS survey have been mined. In 1961, a 127.5 acre Mineral Material Right of Way (U-60729) on the east part of the cinder cone was issued to Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) for road construction and maintenance. In 1991, a patent application (U-18932) for claims filed in the 1950's was rejected and in 1992, the Little Creek Community pit consisting of 63.74 acres on the south

side of the cinder cone was established (U-70051) to provide a continued local source of cinders to the community. In 2007, UDOT relinquished their Material Site ROW and the Little Creek Community pit was redefined to a designated 126 acres that includes the entire cinder cone and all the disturbed areas. Sixty-five acres to the north of the cinder cone previously under the UDOT material site ROW were not included in the pit designation.

The BLM St. George Field Office completed Categorical Exclusion 91-47 in 1991 for general operations within the Little Creek Community pit that is no longer sufficient for the scope of the operations and needs to be updated to assure conformance with environmental requirements. The proposed 42 acre active sales area within the redefined 126 acre Community pit designation would encompass the existing disturbance on the cinder cone and allow for continued resource development. The designated Little Creek Community Pit boundary now includes part of the acreage that was part of the former UDOT ROW. The original 1992, 64 acre designated community pit area includes only half of the 13.5 acre south pit disturbance and does not include the 4.5 acre former UDOT east pit disturbance. The total UDOT/Community pit designated area would be reduced from 191 acres to a designated Community pit area of 126 acres. Mining operations within the Little Creek Community pit are designed to be low to moderate impact and yearly sales are limited to 50,000 tons per year or less as necessary. This assessment will evaluate the impacts for the potential sale of 1 million cubic yards of cinders through competitive/negotiated sales, small (less than \$2000.00) over the counter sales and free use permits from the active sales area of the community pit. Both short and long term contracts to remove mineral materials are issued to state and local governments, companies and the general public. Mineral materials are sold at fair market value, which is determined through appraisal. Approximately 18 acres have been affected by mining to date, 4.5 acres within the east pit and 13.5 acres in the south pit. This EA will analyze the environmental impacts of mining of cinders for the proposed 42 acre sales area.

The cinders are used as a source of lightweight aggregate, typically for use as road metal and in the manufacture of cinder block products. These materials are not readily available on private lands and this community pit represents a local source for St. George and the Washington County area. Washington County is growing and the current and planned development projects will increase demand for all mineral materials. Mineral material sales may be made as long as the aggregate damage to public lands and resources would not exceed the benefits derived from the proposed sale (43 CFR 3600.0-4).

LEGAL DESCRIPTION (Township, Range, and Sections):

T. 43 S., R. 12 W., sec. 1 and T. 43 S., R. 11 W., sec. 6 SLM

LOCATION DESCRIPTION / OTHER REMARKS: The Little Creek Cinder Community pit is administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approximately 10 miles southeast of Hurricane and 20 miles east of St. George in Washington County, Utah (Figure 1).

Figure 1- Index Map for the Little Creek Community Pit

State of Utah

